Greetings from the WGST tower at UNT!

As the spring semester comes to a close, we are very proud to share WGST’s major accomplishments during the 2017-18 academic year. It has been a busy, innovative and adventurous year with quite a few milestones in our efforts to play a central role in the academic, activist and communally engaged life of our institution. In many ways, this was an inaugural year for the program: the first of my role as permanent director and the first of our MA in WGST, which has a deep commitment to social justice embedded in a curriculum focused on scholarly, creative and action-based research.

Additionally, in an effort to engage our affiliated faculty community and to bring awareness of the interdisciplinary richness in our program to our students, we created a lecture series, Speaking of Intersections: Accents and Actions in Women’s & Gender Studies. The goal of this series is to showcase an affiliated faculty member’s particular discipline each semester. We kicked off this series with Dr. Jara Carrington and Dr. Jamie Johnson, who provided an extraordinary presentation on Anthropology.

Collaborations with departments and programs at UNT resulted in a great variety of organized events and co-sponsorships. These events not only allowed WGST to establish a rapport with other disciplines, programs and groups, but also enabled students from outside WGST to learn about our program. In particular, I would like to highlight the tripartite celebration for Women’s History Month, which focused on grassroots activism. With the Multicultural Center and Pride Alliance, we organized a program that started with a tabling event where UNT students shared what activism meant to them. Then we hosted a panel of local leaders representing the African-American community of Southeast Denton, descendants of Quakertown (Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Cole), the Latinx community (Lilyan Prado), and the LGBTQ community (Kat Ralph). These events revealed just how much our UNT student community need to know about our local activists and community organizers! The tabling event and the panel presentation were the preamble to receive and honor Dolores Huerta, an icon of social transformative activism in this country, who presented the documentary Dolores and invigorated a packed Lyceum with the power of “Si se puede!”

With joy, we have noticed an increase in students and faculty coming to our tower. And although our office is windowless and hidden on the 4th floor, we would love for you to continue to visit us and share your feedback and comments.

CONGRATULATIONS! Dr. Sandra Spencer is now an Emerita Director of WGST!!

At its meeting in November 2017, the UNT Board of Regents approved Dr. Spencer’s emerita status. This designation recognizes her many years of distinguished service to the University of North Texas and the Women’s & Gender Studies Program.
Kalin Elizabeth LaPlace

Kalin Elizabeth LaPlace is an Anthropology major and a Women’s and Gender Studies minor. Her main scholarly focus is on cultural anthropology and how culture affects identity, status, and expectations in society. Kalin plans on going to graduate school and continuing in either anthropology or women’s and gender studies. When she’s not reading stuff for school, she is either working (at Lush or at the UNT Applied Arts and Sciences Program’s front desk), playing video games, or watching Judge Judy or The Office.

Gabi Ramdhanny

Gabi Ramdhanny is a Journalism/Public Relations major and a Women’s and Gender Studies minor. She spent the 2017-2018 year as Education Coordinator for UNT’s University Program Council, coordinating events that improve awareness throughout campus.
UNDERGRAD SPOTLIGHT

UNT HONORS DAY RECIPIENT: ARIANTZE OTTO, OUTSTANDING WGST ACTIVIST AWARD
Nominated by: Kristin Alder

Ariantze Otto is a junior English major. Being a Women’s and Gender Studies minor has impacted her beyond the classroom. “It has become a way of life, a frame of mind” she says, one that has filled her with a “consuming need for social [and] political education and participation.” While at UNT, Ariantze has reached far beyond her comfort zone and engaged in a myriad of causes that have helped her develop as a formidable activist. She has been active in the fight to remove the Confederate monument from Denton’s downtown, taking part in not only demonstrations at the monument itself, but also attending public forums and the Commissioner’s Court addressing the issue. Active in Planned Parenthood fundraising, the Women’s March, the March for Gun Control, Denton Transgender Day of Remembrance, SB4 and DACA advocacy, LGBTQ+ issues, and reproductive justice issues,

Ariantze is a strong believer in everyday resistance and reaches out to call or write government representatives daily while also working on the campaigns of local candidates. She works to engage others in the process, acting as a voter registrar and educating potential voters on the importance of voting. While engaging her passions in these varied issues, she continually addresses her own privileges and oppressions while stressing the importance of a continued focus on education, intersectionality, and systemic oppression.

UNT HONORS DAY RECIPIENT: ERIKA LETT, OUTSTANDING WGST SCHOLAR AWARD
Nominated by: Dr. Özlem Altıok

Erica Lett is a Sociology major and Women’s & Gender Studies minor. She transferred to UNT last semester, and so far has taken “Race, Class, Gender, and Ethnicity” and “Gender and Society.” She has a GPA of 3.75 right now. This semester Erica is enrolled in both my seminar style class, “Gender and Sustainable Development” and my online class, “Introduction to WGST.” In addition, she is taking “History of Women in the U.S. since 1900.” I think it is safe to say that she has a scholarly interest in gender!

After graduation, Erica is hoping to attend graduate school studying sociology (but who knows, perhaps she will first pursue a master’s in WGST!). She wants to work in a non-profit organization such as Planned Parenthood or another women’s health/rights organization. Increasing the exposure people have to women’s health and women’s rights is one of her main goals moving forward.

Erica is also a budding activist having taken part in the Women’s March in Austin in January of 2017, and some pride parades. Though she is not sure whether that counts as “activism”, I am sure it does. I look forward to seeing Erica’s scholarly and activist interests grow and support one another.
Affiliated Faculty Highlights

We would like to introduce and welcome our new Affiliated Faculty members to the WGST community!

Dr. Regina Branton, Department of Political Science

Dr. Branton is a Professor in the Department of Political Science, and a member of the LMAS Executive Board at UNT. Her research examines the behavioral, electoral, and institutional implications of race and ethnicity. It is tied together by the intrinsic interest in determining when and how race and ethnicity plays a role in American politics. It extends the existing research by broadening the focus to include multiple racial and ethnic groups. Further, it bridges the gap between the minority politics literature and general political science literature by incorporating theoretical and methodological approaches from both areas of research.

Dr. Jara Carrington, Department of Anthropology

Jara M. Carrington is a Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology. Jara’s teaching and research interests focus on the intersections of gender, sexuality, and race; migration and citizenship; and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social movements in the United States.

How did you become involved with the Women’s & Gender Studies Program?

I gave a presentation as part of the “Speaking of Intersections: Accents and Actions in Women’s & Gender Studies” lecture series, and through my connection to Dr. Alicia Re Cruz. Also, I taught Gender Studies class before at Monmouth University in New Jersey.

How does any of your current research use gender as an analytical lens?

My approach to gender is founded on a robust understanding of intersectionality as a theory and a method. I understand gender as culturally constructed in and through normative hierarchies of race, sexuality, class, religion, nationality, and immigration status. For instance, I have recently begun a new oral histories research project with Latinx LGBTQ communities in North Texas. In this project, individual narratives reveal the ways that gender identity and presentation in the southern United States are intricately connected to other embodied forms of social difference.

Tell us a little bit about your educational background, especially anything that pertains to women or gender.

Working at UNT is a bit of a homecoming for me—I received my PhD in Anthropology at the University of New Mexico, but I also hold a BA in Psychology and a MA in Applied Anthropology from the University of North Texas. As a graduate student, I completed coursework in Women’s and Gender Studies, and used the perspectives and methods I learned to formulate and conduct my dissertation research.
Affiliated Faculty Highlights

Our affiliates have been staying busy! Here are some notable accomplishments...

Dr. Tracy Everbach, School of Journalism

- Published edited book, Mediating Misogyny: Gender, Technology and Harassment with Dr. Jacqueline Vickery of UNT’s Department of Media Arts

Dr. Kate Imy, Department of History

- Presented her research at the Southern Conference of British Studies and the Modern British Studies colloquium in the United Kingdom.
- Organized a successful panel on “War and Society: New Approaches and Directions” at the Western Association of Women Historians’ annual meeting.
- Coordinated a mentoring group consisting of WGST, History, Anthropology, LMAS, and English faculty around the theme of “Borderlands and Migrations.” As part of this, she gave a seminar talk, entitled “Soldiers at the Borderlands,” about her research. This mentoring group also hosted a successful Junior Faculty Series with talks by assistant professors from History, Anthropology, and Spanish. The group hosted Cynthia Bejarano (NMSU) and Junaid Rana (Illinois) for talks on campus.
- Traveled to Denver to receive “10 under 10” award from MSUD, which honors the top 10 alumni from the past 10 years.

Dr. Nada Shabout, Department of Art History

- Presented with UNT’s Presidential Excellency Faculty Award for 2018.
- Received a 2018 grant from The Creative Capital | Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant Program
- Awarded The Crow Collection of Asian Art’s Achievement in Asian Arts and Culture Award (2017)
Event Snapshots

WGST has stayed involved and active in the community, hosting and co-sponsoring various events on campus.
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What we do...

The mission of the Women's and Gender Studies program at UNT promotes teaching, research, and outreach with a critical analytical focus aimed at interrogating gender-related stereotypes, especially as our identities intersect with sexuality, race, and ethnicity in a global context. Our program's interdisciplinary scholarship supports and sustains campus-wide discussions in areas including, but not limited to: global contexts, feminist approaches, women's social movements, feminist activism, and explorations of the connections among gender, class, ethnicity and race in social and cultural constructs. Students in Women's & Gender Studies may interact with more than 40 members of the Women's & Gender Studies affiliated faculty, expanding understandings of gender differences, cultural diversity, and social changes while strengthening critical thinking and communication skills.